

a first metal layer formed on an electrode layer formed on said surface layer [semiconductor], a second metal layer formed on said first metal layer, and a third metal layer formed on said second metal layer; and

a protective film covering over said third metal layer, said protective film covering [and] exposing a central portion of said third metal layer;

said electrode layer being capable of passing an emitted light;

said electrode pad being capable of supplying a current to said electrode layer; and

wherein said second metal layer is made of gold (Au), said first metal layer comprises a material that has an ionization potential lower than gold (Au), and said third metal layer comprises aluminum (Al) that has an adhesiveness to said protection film which is stronger than gold (Au).

2. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 1, wherein said material of said first metal layer includes at least one of nickel (Ni), iron (Fe), copper (Cu), chromium (Cr), tantalum (Ta), vanadium (V), manganese (Mn), aluminum (Al), and silver (Ag).

4. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 1, wherein said protection film is made of silicon oxide (SiO₂).

5. (Twice Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 1, wherein said material of said first metal layer is nickel (Ni).

6. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 1, wherein said electrode layer has a multi-layer structure having at least [having] a first electrode layer formed on said semiconductor and a second electrode layer formed on said first electrode layer, ~~wherein~~ said first electrode layer comprises material having an ionization potential that is lower than that of said second electrode layer, said material of said second electrode layer, has an ohmic characteristic to said semiconductor better than that of said first electrode layer, and said material of said second electrode layer being distributed more deeply into said semiconductor than that of said first electrode layer by heat treatment.

7. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 6, wherein said material of said first electrode layer includes at least one

of nickel (Ni), iron (Fe), copper (Cu), chromium (Cr), tantalum (Ta), vanadium (V), manganese (Mn), aluminum (Al), and silver (Ag), and said material of said second electrode layer includes at least one of palladium (Pd), gold (Au), iridium (Ir), and platinum (Pt).

8. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 6, wherein said material of said first electrode layer is nickel (Ni) and said material of said second electrode layer is gold (Au).

9. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 6, wherein said heat treatment is carried out in the range of 400°C to 700°C.

10. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [A Group III nitride compound semiconductor device having the electrode pad of claim 1 and] according to claim 1, further comprising:

a semiconductor layer having Group III nitride compound semiconductor and satisfying the formula, $Al_xGa_yIn_{1-x-y}N$, wherein $0 < x < 1$, $0 < y < 1$, and $0 < x + y < 1$,

11. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [A semiconductor device of] according to claim 10, wherein said device is one of a light-emitting diode (LED), a light-emitting laser diode (LD) and a transistor.

12. (Amended) A light-emitting semiconductor device having [of] a Group III nitride compound semiconductor [with p-type conduction,] comprising:

a surface layer with p-type conduction;

a multi-layered electrode layer comprising a first electrode layer formed on said surface layer and a second electrode layer formed on said first electrode layer;

an electrode pad covering a portion of said second electrode layer and leaving another portion of said second electrode layer uncovered; and

wherein said first electrode layer comprises a material which has an ionization potential lower than that of said second electrode layer.

said second electrode layer comprises a material which has an ohmic characteristic to said semiconductor better than that of said first electrode layer, and

the portion of said material of said second electrode layer which is uncovered by said electrode pad is distributed more deeply into said surface layer than that of said first electrode

layer by heat treatment and provides a contact resistance between said electrode layer and said surface layer lower than said portion covered with said electrode pad.

13. (Amended) [A] The light-emitting semiconductor device according to claim 12, wherein said material of said first electrode layer includes at least one of nickel (Ni), iron (Fe), copper (Cu), chromium (Cr), tantalum (Ta), vanadium (V), manganese (Mn), aluminum (Al), and silver (Ag) and said material of said second electrode layer includes at least one of palladium (Pd), gold (Au), iridium (Ir), and platinum (Pt).

14. (Amended) [A] The light-emitting semiconductor device according to claim 12, wherein said material of said first electrode layer is nickel (Ni) and said material of said second electrode layer is gold (Au).

20. (Amended) The light-emitting semiconductor device [An electrode pad] according to claim 6, wherein

materials of said second electrode layer do not permeate into said first electrode layer [right] directly under said electrode pad, which enables the interface between said electrode layer and said semiconductor [right] directly under said electrode pad to have a large resistivity and not have electric current pass therethrough.

Please add the following new claims:

22. (New) The light-emitting semiconductor device according to claim 12, wherein said electrode pad comprises:

a first metal layer formed on said surface layer, a second metal layer formed on said first metal layer, and a third metal layer formed on said second metal layer; and

wherein said second metal layer is made of gold (Au), said first metal layer comprises a material that has an ionization potential lower than gold (Au), and said third metal layer comprises a material that has an adhesiveness to said protection film which is stronger than gold (Au).

23. (New) The light-emitting semiconductor device according to claim 22, wherein said material of said first metal layer includes at least one of nickel (Ni), iron (Fe), copper